

Summary of Findings Related to the Impact of School Health (Advisory) Councils August 2008

1. Source: National Association of State Boards of Education: The State of Education Standard, December 2004. The role of Schools in Preventing Childhood Obesity.

The school health council (SHC) is composed of representatives from different segments of the school and community, including parents, teachers, students, school administrators, health care providers, social service professionals, and religious and civic leaders. The SHC provides guidance to the school health coordinator and school administrators on school health activities and rallies support for school health programs. A SHC can help institutionalize health promotion as part of the fundamental mission of the school or school district.

The National Association of State Boards of Education state-level school health policy tracking service reports that 27 states have policies supporting SHCs...SHCs have helped strengthen school physical education and health education curricula and have assisted in bringing about profound changes in school environments, such as the adoption of nutrition standards, establishment of walking programs for staff and students, and the opening of school facilities for after-school physical activity programs.

2. Source: CDC, Division of Adolescent and School Health: Building a Strong Foundation – Make a Difference at your School: Key Strategies to Prevention Obesity, Found on internet on August 2008, www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth.htm.

Strategy #2: Designate a...and maintain an active school health council.

Establishing a school health council (SHC) is an effective way to achieve an enduring focus on promoting physical activity and healthy eating.

Comprising representatives from the home, school, and community, SHCs establish goals for the school health program and facilitate health programming in the school and between the school and community...SHCs have helped create lasting changes in school environments, such as the adoption of nutrition standards, establishment of student and staff walking programs, the provision of adequate class time for physical education and health education, and the opening of school facilities for after-school physical activity programs.

3. Source: Profiles 2006: Characteristics of Health Programs Among Secondary Schools. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007.

Partnerships between schools, families, and community members are important elements of a school health program. The percentage of all schools that had one or more than one group (e.g., a school health council, committee, or team) that offered guidance on the development of policies or coordinated activities on health topics ranged from 34.7% to 73.9% across states (**median: 54.9%**) and from 24.1% to 79.0% across cities (median: 48.4%)

4. Source: Journal of School Health, April 2004. The relationship between school health councils and school health policies and programs in U.S. schools.

A school health council is a group...Regardless of name, each group has been described as a critical component of a school health program. For example, Fetro explains that establishing a healthy school team is a step that schools can take to establish a school health program. Similarly, the Institute of Medicine states that “the essential foundation for any successful comprehensive school health program is built from the involvement of a wide range of community stakeholders” and continues that “this involvement can be effectively organized and channeled through the formation of some type of community school health coordinating council”.

Schools with school health councils have significantly greater odds than schools without councils of having some key school health policies and programs.

Results showed schools with councils that addressed specific health education topics sometimes had greater odds than schools that did not have councils addressing these topics to require health instruction in the topics.

5. Source: University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, August 2008. Report to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction – Governor’s School Health Award.

The purpose of the evaluation study was to examine the efficacy of the Governor’s School Health Award by finding what, in any, changes were implemented in the policies and practices of the schools as a result of their participation in the award program. The evaluation study involved 20 schools who completed the Governor’s School Health Award application process in the 2007-08 school year. Fifty-four telephone interviews were conducted with school staff from the 20 evaluation schools in May – June 2008. The evaluation study did look at the impact of school health advisory councils, among other things, on the health efforts of the participating schools.

The evaluation study found that school health councils did have a positive affect in a number of school health-related program areas. The majority of the participating schools reported that they had made minor or significant changes to 1) opportunities for physical activity, 2) nutrition education, 3) parental involvement, 4) physical education, 5) food service, and 6) community involvement due, in part, to the influence of their school health councils.

***Note:** Over the past two years every school that has received a Governor’s School Health Award, 35 schools, has had a functioning school health advisory council.

6. Colorado State Department of Education, January 1996. Connections: The Colorado Comprehensive Health Education Act of 1990: 1994-95 End of Year Report.

During the years 1991-1995...Three key components of the Colorado model are: (1) the establishment of a local health advisory committees:...Project results demonstrated that this community-based “comprehensive” approach, connecting all components of the program and all

grades, with students and staff within the school, and with parents and community resources made a difference not only in health relate issues but also school performance and attendance.

The funded programs that reported success:

- Every program has a local advisory committee
- Health education is present in all programs
- Health programs increase....

7. Source: Health Education Research, December 1991. The implementation of a cardiovascular school health promotion programs: Utilization and impact of a school health advisory committee: The Heart Smart program.

Developed a multidisciplinary school health advisory committee to enhance acceptance and support for a total elementary school cardiovascular health promotion program (Heart Smart)...The interactive nature of this committee, coupled with self-directed goal setting, provides a school model for (1) institutionalizing health promotion, (2) providing school personnel and parents with program ownership, and (3) reinforcing school commitment to heart health.